Spurs slip at Burnley increases pressure on Frank as City win

LONDON: Thomas Frank's job is under renewed threat after Tottenham Hotspur dropped more points in a 2-2 draw at relegation-threatened Burnley on Saturday as Manchester City provisionally cut the gap to Premier League leaders Arsenal to four points.

Disgruntled Spurs fans vented their anger at their manager after last week's damaging 2-1 defeat against West Ham United, chanting: "You're getting sacked in the morning." The former Brentford boss breathed a sigh of relief after a 2-0 midweek win against Borussia Dortmund in the Champions League.

But Tottenham travelled to Turf Moor in desperate need of a win in the Premier League after just two victories in 13 league games.

The visitors dominated the first half and deservedly led when Micky van de Ven produced a powerful left-footed strike after Burnley failed to clear.

But they conceded moments before half-time when defender Axel Tuanzebe side-footed home a Kyle Walker cross and worse was to follow for the visitors when Lyle Foster put Burnley ahead in the 76th minute.

In a nail-biting finale, Xavi Simons rattled the crossbar for Spurs before captain Cristian Romero headed home a leveller in the 90th minute.

The draw leaves Spurs 13th in the table.

Pep Guardiola's City came into the match against Wolverhampton Wanderers at the Etihad without a win in four league games in 2026 and smarting after an embarrassing 3-1 Champions League defeat at Norwegian side Bodo/Glimt.

Erling Haaland was left on the bench after just one goal in five league matches, with Guardiola explaining his star forward needed to "clean a little bit his mind and body".

Centre-back Marc Guehi made his debut five days after his move from Crystal Palace, easing City's crippling defensive crisis that has claimed John Stones, Ruben Dias and Josko Gvardiol.

Egypt forward Omar Marmoush put the home side ahead in the sixth minute, finishing sharply from a Matheus Nunes cross for his first Premier League goal of the season.

City made it 2-0 shortly before half-time when Antoine Semenyo scored his third goal for the club in all competitions since arriving at the Etihad from Bournemouth earlier this month.

The win lifts City to 46 points — four behind Arsenal, who host Michael Carrick's Manchester United on Sunday.

But bottom club Wolves, 14 points from safety, appear to be doomed despite a recent uptick in results.

Fulham came back from a goal down to beat Brighton & Hove Albion 2-1 at Craven Cottage.

Samuel Chukwueze cancelled out Yasin Ayari's spectacular first-half strike for the visitors and Harry Wilson grabbed a winner in stoppage time.

Earlier, West Ham blew Sunderland away 3-1 to make it two wins out of two and climb to within two points of Premier League safety.

The home side effectively had the game sewn up by half-time after Crysencio Summerville's opener, Jarrod Bowen's penalty and a long-range rocket from Mateus Fernandes.—AFP

BURNLEY: Tottenham Hotspur's Cristian Romero celebrates after scoring the equaliser during the Premier League match against Burnley at Turf Moor on Saturday.—Reuters

India rout NZ to top group, Japan claim first win

BULAWAYO: India concluded their group stage campaign with three wins out of three as they thumped New Zealand by seven wickets in the ICC U-19 Men's World Cup at the Queens sports Club in Bulawayo on Saturday.

After putting New Zealand in to bat, India started strongly, leaving them reeling at 17-3 in 7.1 overs.

The Group 'B' game was reduced to 37 overs per side, but the Indian bowlers continued to mount pressure on New Zealand.

Crucial contributions came lower down the order for the as Jacob Cotter (23), Callum Samson (37 not out) and Selwin Sanjay (28) took New Zealand to 135.

With the ball, New Zealand picked up Aaron George early but had no answer to the onslaught by Vaibhav Sooryavanshi and Ayush Mhatre as their partnership of 76 from just 39 balls put New Zealand on the back foot.

Even after Sooryavanshi and Mhatre were dismissed, Vihaan Malhotra and Vedant Trivedi had little trouble in closing out the win for India, chasing the total in just 13.3 overs.

Meanwhile, Japan saw off a convincing victory over Tanzania — their first in the tournament's history — at the High Performance Oval in Windhoek to seize the first play-off of the 13th-16th playoff bracket.

Tanzania opted to bat first and made a good start despite losing Karim Kiseto in the second over. Acrey Pascal and Ayaan Shariff stitched together a 79-run stand, with the former bringing up his fifty.

Pascal fell shortly afterwards and Rehaan Ahtif joined forces with Shariff to take the Tanzanian innings forward. However, Nihar Parmar gave Japan a crucial breakthrough again, dismissing Shariff. The wicket triggered a Tanzanian collapse as they lost seven wickets for just 13 runs to be bowled out for 131 inside 39 overs.

Parmar picked up four wickets and was adjudged the player-of-the-match. The opener also starred with the bat as he stitched a 122-run stand with Taylor Waugh. He would remain unbeaten for 53 and took Japan home in just 28.2 overs.--Agencies

LONDON: West Ham United's Taty Castellanos stretches to control the ball under pressure from Sunderland's Daniel Ballard and Omar Alderete (L) during their Premier League match at the London Stadium on Saturday.—AFP

Sinner survives, Djokovic sizzles as heat triggers Melbourne chaos

MELBOURNE: Jannik Sinner battled back from the brink of a cramp-induced breakdown to keep his Australian Open title defence alive after

brutal heat triggered a five-hour suspension of matches on outdoor courts at Melbourne Park on Saturday but Novak Djokovic escaped the furnace to forge ahead.

Players and spectators roasted on day seven at Melbourne Park, where temperatures soared to 38C. The tournament's Heat Stress Scale hit the highest level of five in the early afternoon, prompting the suspension on courts without roofs and play did not resume until after 7:00 pm.

Iga Swiatek continued to misfire in her hunt for a maiden Melbourne Park crown and a career Grand Slam, the second seed singed in her 6-1, 1-6 6-1 win over Russian Anna Kalinskaya to reach the fourth round.

Local favourite Maddison Inglis' path was much easier, and she goes on to play Swiatek in the last 16 after her opponent and twice Australian Open champion Naomi Osaka pulled out with an abdominal injury.

The Japanese star, who made a grand entrance this week in a jellyfish-inspired outfit, wrote on Instagram that "it breaks my heart".

On a dramatic day on and off court, reigning champion Madison Keys also moved into the last 16.

Second seed Sinner provided the early drama, as the Italian dropped his first set since October against inspired American Eliot Spizzirri and was a limping wreck under a blazing sun at Rod Laver Arena.

The match swung in his favour when the tournament invoked its extreme heat policy, allowing the stadium's roof to shut and Sinner to rally for a dramatic 4-6, 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 win.

The Italian said he was "lucky" to finish the last two sets under the roof, after

SWITZERLAND'S Stan Wawrinka applauds fans after losing his Australian Open third-round match against Taylor Fritz of the US at the Melbourne Park on Saturday.—Reuters

cramp affected first his legs and then his arms.

"Tennis is a mental game. I just tried to play as calm as possible," he said. "I struggled physically a bit today as you saw. I got lucky with the heat rule, they closed the roof."

His reward is a clash next with fellow Italian Luciano Darderi, the 22nd seed who defeated Russia's Karen Khachanov 7-6 (7/5), 3-6, 6-3, 6-4.

On a historic day for Italy, fifth seed Lorenzo Musetti saw off Tomas Machac 5-7, 6-4, 6-2, 5-7, 6-2. It was the first time that three Italian men had reached the last 16 of the Australian Open.

Musetti goes up against American ninth seed Taylor Fritz after he ended the run of Stan Wawrinka on the popular Swiss veteran's farewell to the tournament in four sets.

The 40-year-old former champion is playing his last season. "It's been an amazing journey," he said, cracking open a can on court afterwards.

Fellow seasoned campaigner Marin Cilic also exited after a 6-4, 6-4, 3-6, 7-5 loss to 12th seed Casper Ruud.

Djokovic opened the evening session on Rod Laver Arena in much better conditions, the Serb defeating dangerous Dutchman Botic van de Zandschulp 6-3, 6-4, 7-6 (7/4) to continue his hunt for a record 25th Grand Slam title.

With his 102nd match win at Melbourne, he equalled six-times champion Roger Federer's record at the major and also became the first player to secure 400 match victories at Grand Slams.

"It's been a great start to the tournament," said Djokovic, who next takes on young gun Jakub Mensik. "Things can change and I'm not getting ahead of myself."

KEYS IMPRESSES

With the temperature forecast to hit a scorching 40 degrees Celsius (104F), the action started an hour earlier than usual to take advantage of cooler morning conditions.

Keys had no intention of hanging about as she dismissed former world number one Karolina Pliskova of the Czech Republic 6-3, 6-3 in a statement victory to set up a last-16 showdown with podcast co-host Jessica Pegula.

After admitting to being nervous and timid in embarking on her title defence, this was more like the Keys that stunned Aryna Sabalenka in the final a year ago.

The 30-year-old Keys said that being based in Florida meant she was used to hot temperatures. "I am feeling really good and I was excited for the heat today, and ready for it," she said.

The ninth seed faces good friend and compatriot Pegula for a place in the quarter-finals. The sixth-seeded Pegula powered past unseeded Russian Oksana Selekhmeteva 6-3, 6-2.

"Nice to be first out on court and not a super long match and didn't need to kill myself in the heat today," she said.

Fourth seed Amanda Anisimova soon followed the duo into the fourth round with a 6-1, 6-4 victory over fellow American Peyton Stearns in the second match at Margaret Court Arena.

"I hated training in the summer," Anisimova said. "But you know what? At least it paid off a little bit. It's great to be playing out here even when it's so hot, it's nice to have a challenge."

While the Americans soared, Elise Mertens, Elena Rybakina and Wang Xinyu all flew under the radar to progress.

STARS AND STRIPES

On a day dominated by Americans, eighth seed Ben Shelton delivered another victory for the Stars and Stripes, beating Valentin Vacherot 6-4, 6-4 7-6 (7/5).

Shelton's win was held up at 4-4 in the tiebreak as Vacherot thought the American hit the ball after a double-bounce. Shelton was handed the point after a video review that took so long even Vacherot was ready to concede it to get the match going again.

A semi-finalist last year, Shelton was almost as happy as Sinner for the roof to be closed when he played at Margaret Court Arena.

"I don't think I could have finished this match without the roof, I don't think anyone could," he said. "You all stay cool out there."

Organisers warned fans to bring hats, slap on sunscreen and drink plenty of water - but many avoided the major altogether. The day session attendance of 51,048 was some 10,000 short of Friday and even less than last year's corresponding session.—Agencies

Steady Root helps England level ODI series against SL

COLOMBO: Joe Root produced a batting masterclass on a turning track to steer England to a hard-fought five-wicket win over Sri Lanka, squaring the three-match ODI series in Colombo on Saturday.

With their backs to the wall and defeat meaning curtains for the series, Root played the anchor to perfection, crafting a gritty 75 as England crossed the line with 22 deliveries to spare.

"Nice to get a win on a very difficult surface. The key when you come here is to play as late as possible. To be brutally honest, it wasn't a great wicket for ODI cricket. But we adapted well and learned from the mistakes in the first game," said Root.

Chasing a modest 220, England found the target anything but a cakewalk on a surface that kept low and offered generous assistance for spin.

Scoreboard

SRI LANKA:

P. Nissanka c Jacks b Rashid	26
K. Mishara c Duckett b Overton	5
K. Mendis run out	26
D. de Silva c Root b Dawson	40
C. Asalanka c Duckett b Rashid	45
J. Liyanage c Rashid b Overton	12
P. Rathnayake c Dawson b Jacks	29
D. Wellalage c Curran b Root	20
P. Madushan st Buttler b Ahmed	8
J. Vandersay not out	1
A. Fernando c&b Root	0
EXTRAS (LB-2, W-5)	7
TOTAL (all out, 49.3 overs)	219

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-16 (Mishara), 2-58 (Nissanka), 3-68 (Mendis), 4-134 (de Silva), 5-151 (Liyanage), 6-179 (Asalanka), 7-193 (Rathnayake), 8-213 (Madushan), 9-219 (Wellalage)

BOWLING: Overton 5-1-21-2 (1w), Curran 4-0-16-0 (2w), Dawson 10-1-41-1, Jacks 10-0-47-1 (1w), Rashid 10-0-34-2 (1w), Bethell 3-0-20-0, Ahmed 5-0-26-1, Root 2.3-0-12-2

ENGLAND:

R. Ahmed b de Silva	13
B. Duckett b Vandersay	39
J. Root lbw b Fernando	75
J. Bethell c Asalanka b de Silva	6
H. Brook lbw b Vandersay	42
J. Buttler not out	33
W. Jacks not out	8
EXTRAS (LB-1, W-6)	7
TOTAL (for five wickets, 46.2 overs)	223

DID NOT BAT: S. Curran, J. Overton, L. Dawson, A. Rashid

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-20 (Ahmed), 2-88 (Ben), 3-97 (Bethell), 4-178 (Root), 5-189 (Brook)

BOWLING: Fernando 7-0-31-1, Madushan 3.2-0-20 (1w), de Silva 7-0-37-2, Wellalage 10-0-50-0 (1w), Asalanka 8-0-27-0, Vandersay 10-0-45-2, Rathnayake 1-0-12-0

RESULT: England won by five wickets.

PLAYER-OF-THE-MATCH: Joe Root

Unfurling the sweep and reverse sweep, Root teased the spinners, milked the singles with soft hands and rotated strike intelligently. His 81-run fourth-wicket stand with skipper Harry Brook took the sting out of the chase with Root bringing up his half-century off just 52 balls.

The rest of the batting wobbled without fully collapsing, but with the former captain holding one end together, England's well-documented troubles against spin were neatly papered over.

Root had already notched a half-century in the opening game and once again looked untroubled by the slow bowlers, forcing Sri Lanka to turn to pace. The breakthrough eventually came via Asitha Fernando, who trapped Root leg before with a sharp yorker.

By then, England needed 42 off 59 balls and Jos Buttler calmly applied the finishing touches with an unbeaten 33 off 21 to see the former world champions home.

Earlier, England's decision to beef up their spin resources paid rich dividends. Brook used no fewer than six slow bowlers as Sri Lanka were bowled out with three deliveries to spare.

ENGLAND'S Jamie Overton celebrates after dismissing Sri Lankan batter Janith Liyanage during the second One-day International at the R. Premadasa International Stadium on Saturday.—AFP

England sent down 40.3 overs of spin, the most they have ever bowled in an ODI, surpassing their previous mark of 36 overs against Pakistan in Sharjah back in 1985.

Sri Lanka showed early promise but failed to convert starts into substance, repeatedly perishing in the deep while attempting to clear the ropes. Not a single batter managed a half-century.

Kusal Mendis, arguably Sri Lanka's best player of spin, looked fluent during his 26 but threw his wicket away attempting a suicidal single.

"We were short by 30 runs. Kusal's run out was crucial. But credit to England. We tried everything and the way Joe Root batted made the difference," Sri Lanka skipper Charith Asalanka conceded.

The series decider will be played on Tuesday at the same venue.—AFP

Nepal skipper eyes new summit with 'nothing to lose' at T20 World Cup

COLOMBO: Nepal captain Rohit Paudel says his side have "nothing to lose" in next month's T20 World Cup as they target more famous upsets and a place in the tournament's Super Eight second phase.

The Himalayan nation stunned the two-time T20 World Cup winners West Indies last year for their first series win over a Test-playing side in the shortest format.

It gave them huge belief ahead of the 20-team event starting on Feb 7 in India and Sri Lanka that they can repeat the feat and take down one of the cricketing powers.

Nepal will face the West Indies again in Group 'C' alongside another two-time champions, England, and debutants Italy.

Bangladesh, who refused to play the global event matches in India over security concerns, were also drawn in the group, and replaced by Scotland on Saturday.

Paudel and his team are currently in Colombo, practising ahead of their opener against England on Feb 8 at Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium.

"As a team, we have everything to gain from here," Paudel, who at 23 is the youngest captain at the event, told AFP.

"Nothing to lose, and we can play freely. We will try to showcase our skills in front of the world."

The 17th-ranked Nepal will not have any group matches in Sri Lanka.

But it is a sign of their confidence that they opted to train in Colombo as preparations for the subsequent Super Eight round, where they would play in Sri Lanka if they qualify as one of the top two in the group.

"Realistically, I think beating a Test-playing country would be a great opportunity for all of us," Paudel said "Reaching the Super Eight would be another one, so we are eyeing that spot.

"But the first aim is to play the best brand of cricket we know. And we will try to do that."

Cricket does not enjoy the same adulation in Nepal as it does in neighbouring South Asian nations where the game dominates popular culture.

But interest has surged over the past decade.

Nepal made their T20 World Cup debut in 2014 and returned in 2024, pushing South Africa and Bangladesh close in narrow defeats.

The International Cricket Council granted Nepal One-day International status in 2018, a milestone that helped accelerate investment and fan interest.

Domestic competitions such as the Nepal Premier League have drawn growing crowds and commercial backing, further widening the talent pipeline.

Team manager Prabal Gautam said training in the Sri Lankan capital was to help players adapt from the cool Himalayan climate to the heat and humidity further south.

Players initially struggled with temperatures above 30C in Colombo, he said, but were gradually acclimatising.

"This is the first step of practice matches before the World Cup, just to cope with the weather and to play quality cricket," Gautam told AFP.

The squad plan further sessions in Mumbai before their group matches tournament and fancy their chances of going further.

"Being a small nation, being a small cricketing team, we also have a dream of winning the World Cup," Gautam said, adding dreams can come true.

"First we had a dream of playing in a World Cup. Now this is our third time at a World Cup."—AFP